

Division of Public Health Announces New Zika Transmission Guidelines and Delaware Cases

DOVER, DE – Today, the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) updated its guidelines for sexual transmission of the Zika virus following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announcement of the first reported case of female to male sexual transmission in New York. DPH is also announcing two new travel-related cases in Delaware. A Sussex County woman, and a New Castle County man tested positive for the Zika virus, bringing the total number of cases in Delaware to 10. All of the Zika positive test results are due to a mosquito bite while traveling abroad and none involve a pregnancy. Both individuals were tested within the last few weeks.

Zika is spread primarily through mosquito bite, but also can be sexually transmitted or passed from mother to fetus during pregnancy. CDC recommends that all pregnant women who have a sex partner who has traveled to, or resides in, an area with Zika use barrier methods every time they have sex or, they should not have sex during the pregnancy. Although no cases of woman-to-woman Zika transmission have been reported, these recommendations now also apply to female sex partners of pregnant women. Condoms or dental dams should be used during oral sex and condoms should be used for sex involving penetration. Sex includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex, and may also include the sharing of sex toys.

A total of 145 individuals have been, or are in the process of being, tested in Delaware. At this time, there are 121 negative results, 10 positive results, 11 test results pending

and two indeterminate results in pregnant females. Indeterminate means that it is not possible to definitively confirm the existence of the Zika virus in the human body. Both individuals with indeterminate results were traveling or living abroad this past winter. To protect patient privacy, DPH will not announce any other information on the status of the pregnancies. Consistent with other states, DPH will announce any Zika-related microcephaly cases after a birth should it occur.

According to the CDC, there are 1,404 confirmed cases of Zika virus in the United States and District of Columbia as of July 20. While no Zika cases have been confirmed to be from a mosquito bite that occurred in the continental U.S., Florida public health officials and the CDC are investigating two Zika cases that may have occurred due to a mosquito bite in that state.

DPH previously announced new Zika public education materials targeting pregnant women and their male partners, including offering Zika Prevention Kits to pregnant women. The kits are being distributed at Delaware Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clinics and other locations. Recommended by the CDC, the kit contains mosquito repellent, condoms, thermometers, and informational brochures. DPH will also be offering updated information and links to educational materials, which can be found at: dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/zika.html.

Zika, a generally mild illness, has been linked to serious birth defects in Brazil and other countries and is most often spread by mosquitoes.

Travel and Transmission Advisories

- If you are pregnant, postpone travel to the countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. If your sexual partner has traveled to or lives in an area with active Zika virus transmission, barrier methods (condoms, dental dams) should be used for the duration of the pregnancy. Although no cases of

woman-to-woman Zika transmission have been reported to date, these recommendations regarding the use of protection now extend to the female partners of pregnant women. Discuss your partner's potential exposures and history of Zika-like illness with your doctor.

- If you are trying to become pregnant and have been diagnosed with Zika virus or have symptoms of Zika, wait at least eight weeks after symptoms first appeared before trying to conceive. Men who have been diagnosed with Zika virus or have symptoms are advised to wait at least six months after symptoms first appeared before having vaginal, oral, or anal unprotected sex.
- Men and women who do not have symptoms of Zika but had possible exposure through recent travel or sexual contact should wait at least eight weeks after possible exposure before trying to conceive in order to minimize risk.
- If your partner lives in an area with active Zika transmission but has not developed symptoms, use barrier methods for sex while there is active Zika virus transmission in the area. Sex includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex, and may also include the sharing of sex toys.
- If you are pregnant or may become pregnant and must travel to an area with Zika, talk to your doctor first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip. If you traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission up to eight weeks before your pregnancy was confirmed, discuss your travel history with your doctor.

About one in five people infected with the virus develop the disease, and most people who are infected do not develop symptoms. The most common symptoms of Zika virus are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Symptoms typically begin two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

To report a potential Zika illness or receive further guidance on patient testing, call the DPH Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 302-744-4990. For copies of flyers and more

educational tools, see the below links.

For further information for pregnant women and their male partners:

- [Flyer for pregnant women in English](#)
- [Flyer for pregnant women in Spanish](#)
- [Flyer for pregnant women in Haitian Creole](#)

Zika FAQs and mosquito control tips:

- [In English](#)
- [In Spanish](#)
- [In Haitian Creole](#)

To reduce the risk of mosquito bites, use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents; stay in places with air conditioning or that use window or door screens to keep mosquitoes outside; sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are outside and not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes; treat clothing and gear with permethrin available in pharmacies or purchase permethrin-treated items; and wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

To learn more about how to reduce mosquitoes around your home, two videos with information about Zika virus and backyard water sanitation tips also are available on DNREC's YouTube Channel: Zika Virus, Mosquitoes & You, and Mosquito Control & Your Backyard.

To report intolerable numbers of biting mosquitoes and request local relief, residents are encouraged to call Mosquito Control's field offices:

- Glasgow Office, 302-836-2555, serving New Castle County and the northern half of Kent County, including Dover
- Milford Office, 302-422-1512, serving the southern half of Kent County south of Dover and all of Sussex County
- For more information about Delaware's Mosquito Control program, call the field offices or the main Dover office at 302-739-9917, or visit <http://de.gov/mosquito>.

General Zika information:

- [CDC information on Zika](#)
- [DPH Zika page](#)
- [CDC Zika webpage information in Spanish](#)

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.